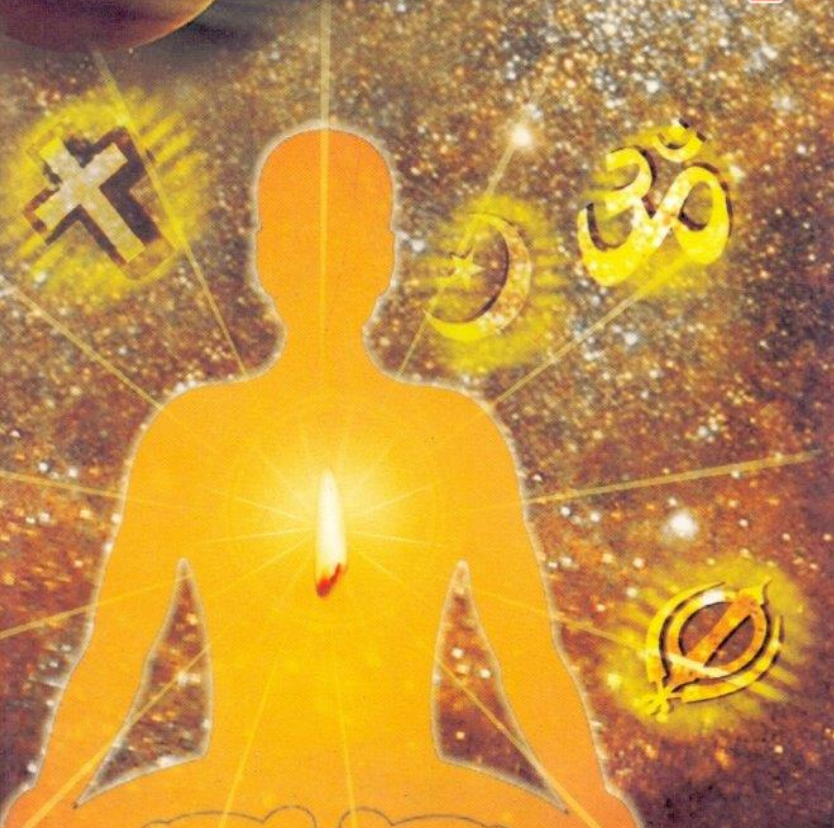


# The Meaning, Purpose & Benefits of Worship



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English Translation of  
*"Upāsanā Kā Tatva Darśana aur Swarūpa"*



**Author:**  
Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

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**English Translation by**

**Dr. Amitabh Saraf and**

**Shri Arun K. Saraf**

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**Ph. 91(01334) 260602 Fax. 91(01334) 260866**

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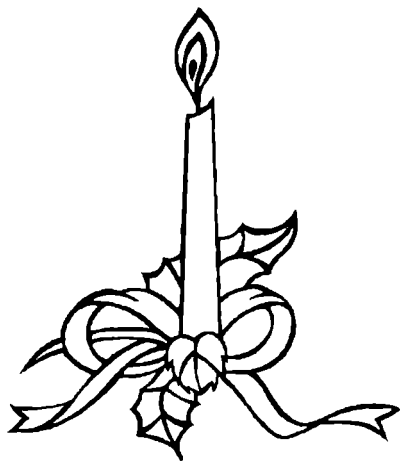
**Email: [shantikunj@awgp.org](mailto:shantikunj@awgp.org)**

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# Contents

1. Prayer and Worship Need to be Integrated into Daily Routine of Life .....	05
2. True Nature of Worship .....	15
3. 'O' God the Supreme! Sanctify Us .....	37
4. Definite Beneficial Results of Sincere Prayer-Upasana .....	55
5. Footnotes: Glossary of Sanskrit Words Used in this book .....	79





# *Prayer and Worship Need to be Integrated into Daily Routine of Life*

**W**orshipping is absolutely essential to keep up one's faith in divinity. Inanimate objects are all around us and our senses can feel their presence again and again. But we need to consciously remind ourselves of and meditate upon what is transcendent and invisible, else naturally that would be forgotten. We tend to forget about even normal objects of daily use that we happen not to use for a while. Man by nature is forgetful, and that's necessary too. If he weren't so forgetful, his mind would be crammed with so many memories and reminiscences that there would be no space left for him to listen

## *Chapter* **1**

and understand anything new. Forgetfulness is more natural on what cannot be seen with the eyes or perceived by other sense organs.

God is one such sublime force that is neither visible to the eyes nor can be perceived through other senses. Realization of God is also beyond the grasp of the human intellect. So people normally are oblivious of God. Though generally speaking, we all know about God and believe in Him, we listen and read about Him regularly as well, but such a belief is like a pale shadow consigned to some corner of our mind. This sort of belief does not fulfill the purpose of faith in divinity. To thwart impure thoughts and control our propensity to impure deeds, a clear memory of God must always be imprinted on our heart and we must remember Him as we remember our family and close relatives. Otherwise our mind would not receive the inspiring radiance of the Almighty and would have no fear of His disciplines.

The purpose of faith in God is fulfilled only when we can experience God as our companion. At the occurrence of an impure thought or an inclination to impure deed, if God presents Himself to us in the form of a preacher, a judge or a police officer, only then it would be possible to check our steps from following wrong paths. When a desire to follow a righteous path arises but there is hesitation seeing the obstacles ahead, then God's presence must be felt as one that always encourages, motivates and supports us. A man who is with a high-spirited, constantly encouraging and cooperating companion can accomplish a lot. And if this encouragement to

raze through all the impediments present on the righteous path comes directly from God to man, then there is nothing that a man cannot accomplish.

If God's enduring image constantly floats in front of our eyes and if His invisible power shows up to us in a living form only then it is possible for our mind to follow the path of righteousness unyieldingly, renouncing all sinfulness. God's worship alone can lead us to this immense experience and intrinsic feeling that He, the invisible Supreme Self, is a visible friend and a true companion. The devotional practices of chanting, meditation, prayers, offerings etc have been created so that with earnest efforts man remembers God again and again, and experiences Him in the form of a close relative, a family member, a friend and as a companion always. Worship can fulfill this psychological need. By remembering each other again and again, if two bereft lovers can feel each other's presence right in their hearts, then why can't God be experienced like a dear one by constant remembrance through the depths of the heart? If we can experience God as a beloved one always living with us then it would be so easy to stay away from sins and to engage ourselves in righteous deeds. We would also remain courageous, free from worries, optimistic and spirited. Why would one, who has power of God with him, be afraid of anyone? What would be left to cause him worries, fears, sorrows, or despair? Why wouldn't he see his future bright and his destiny radiant? Such a person can remain happy, content and cheerful always, considering adverse circumstances as transient and have arisen to teach him a lesson or two to correct himself. When God Himself is



True, Benevolent, Blissful and Beautiful, why would His worshipper be any different?

God is the focal point of all noble tendencies, virtues and unbounded powers. If the soul wishes to elevate up to the ultimate realms of divinity and expand itself into the limitless, it needs to have a suitable paradigm for itself. Engineers who construct big buildings first prepare models and maps and on that basis embark upon their construction. If we wish to move forward, transform ourselves into great men and visionaries, transmute our soul into God, then we need some sort of models and maps too. God is the absolute embodiment of *sat-chit-ānanda* — Omnipresent, Eternal Consciousness Force and Beatifying Bliss. His reflection is a perfect ideal, looking at which we can chart out a progressive programme for our enlightened progress.

There is an interesting account of a humming bee called Bhṛīṅga that entices a cricket. The cricket gets completely immersed into Bhṛīṅga's intonation and its outer form, and based upon this deep engrossment ends up slowly transforming its own form into that of the fly! The scriptures narrate this example at several places. How true the account is, is a matter of research; but this is absolutely true in relation to soul. The more the soul devotedly meditates upon God, the more it gets transformed into God's form. Several ordinary souls have been seen getting transformed into great souls along this path of ascent. Evolution is the aim of life; self-transmutation is a natural aspiration of the soul for which, remembrance, meditation, prayers and worship of God provide the necessary light, spirit and support.

The spiritual element of love and devotion in the heart forms the basis of closeness between the soul and God, and the unification of one with the other. It is indeed the 'glue' of pure love that binds the hearts of humans and creates intimacy. The unity of God and the soul also delves upon the same. Physical objects are ephemeral; they are created a moment and destroyed the next. Living beings are also similar; their attitudes keep changing with situations and their predilections. So living beings cannot uphold a true and eternal love. State of a person near us definitely has an effect on us, and therefore one who wishes to devote oneself to Love, needs to search for a basis that is firm and overflows with divine possibilities. Love is the most blissful feeling of human life, and in this cosmos God is the solitary authority that deserves to be the center of human love. Life that dedicates love to God gets blessed. Devotion to Him provides light ever. When overpowering darkness and despair surround, the Light Divine alone all of a sudden shows the way and bestows indescribable happiness and cheer.

Today not just India, but the entire world has fallen into a frightening state. World stands on the brink of total destruction. To save this world from annihilation it is imperative to resort to prayers, individually as well as collectively.

In the Dwapar Era, foreseeing the frightening role to be played by the Mahabharat War and distressed with concern towards this nation and the whole world, lifting both his hands Bhagavan Vyas called out and implored, "O men

intoxicated with false pride, *Dharma* is far superior to *artha*<sup>1</sup> and *kāma*. Much importance to *artha* would lead to your downfall. So take refuge in altruistic benevolence and noble deeds” But men enslaved by *artha* and *kāma*, did not pay heed to his imploration and the result was the fierce war of Mahabharat.

The world of today has again plunged into the same Mahabharat like condition. Today's atomic weapons of mass destruction are far more fearsome and devastating than the arms and weapons of that era. At the same time, the world has become far greedier, self-centered and materialistic. Like the great sage Ved Vyas, so many seers and thinkers of today are also calling out and beseeching man fervently but man has gone deaf again, so much like then. He cannot see anything, nor hear anything!

But where on one side people with demonic assets are preparing to destroy this world with their physical resources, on the other side people with divine assets bearing goodwill towards the world are seeking God's grace using spiritual resources. And in this battle of divinity and demons, based upon the principle of “triumph of *Dharma* and extermination of *Adharma*” *Dharma* the righteous, the benevolent, would definitely prevail at the end of it all.

An elaborate effort is needed to root out destructive elements that prevail in this world. People who have faith in God do not possess a stockpile of physical resources like the people with destructive mentality do, they do not believe in doing that

either. However, the limitless power of remembrance of God and its manifestation in the form of prayer that they possess is mightier than all others forces of this world. If all well-meaning men of this world begin to pray daily to their individual or a single God, this world would be rid of all adversities and a spring of peace and happiness would begin to flow instead.

It is an undeniable fact that all the destructive processes of this world would transform to constructive ones if the leading talents of today, the rich and powerful, the scientists, politicians, etc, along with sincere transaction of their works also devote some time for praying to the Almighty for the enlightenment and wellbeing of the world. This would gradually transform their attitude from selfishness to selflessness and pull their mind against the destructive tendencies. Their abilities would be diverted towards upliftment and welfare of this world.

But to bring about such a change in them more and more people must resort to praying and in their prayers must mingle the feeling of getting bestowed with benevolent thoughts.

Time and again it has been seen that whenever a misfortune befalls a man or a nation, praying to God is promptly resorted to for respite. In the times of war all places of worship temples and mosques, churches, Gurudwaras and other shrines begin to resound with chimes and bells and collective prayers are offered. Sacred chants are recited. People appoint

religious men and priests for special prayers and to seek God's grace. This clearly establishes the point that everyone knows the importance of prayers and believes in its potential, but then it is surprising why they don't pray to God daily and thereby prevent calamities from falling on this world.

Everyone can see disasters waiting at the shore of this world today ready to strike. Why don't people then, by means of the infallible power of prayers, prepare to subside these before the doom's day? Are they watching and waiting for the calamities to actually begin ruining their very existence and then they would begin praying to the savior? This would be a grave mistake. Once the annihilating powers are unleashed, man's intellect would fail completely. Then he would not be able to see beyond himself, and in this tumultuous state of mind his prayers would not be as effective as they would be when his mind is serene and tranquil.

So we all should right from this day initiate a feasible programme for individual and collective worship of God for peace to ourselves and to this world.

God's worship is a resource that can easily bring about an everlasting peace. Conferences for peace are daily organized worldwide. If they are really serious in their endeavour, then along with conferences, prayers are also essential. Collective prayers offered to God induce an excellent psychological impact - they generate goodwill among the people. As we all know, peace cannot be established without sincere goodwill, even if millions of conferences are held.

As man starts looking up to God he begins to attain peace. His attempts to bring about peace in this world would be more successful when peace would begin to pervade his own heart.

Not only in the world, in a limited expanse of his relations and even in his own individual life everyone greatly needs to attain peace. In today's world lack of peace in personal lives is as pervasive as the lack of peace in the society. It has become so commonplace to see constant unpleasantness and strife in relationships, among father and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, employer and servant and so on. Does such hellish life befit man? Does it appear right that at each step man should encounter an environment of jealousy, envy, deceit, dishonesty and distrust? Instead of the springs of beautiful, pure brook of love, should fires blaze in this world?

Is there anyone who has not got sick of this discordant life? Not one person can be found who doesn't want respite from such a situation. There is just one way for relief from all the sorrows - prayers. All sorrows and grieves would begin to part from this world the moment truthful heartfelt prayers to God that man should follow the path of righteousness which is free from imperfections and impurities commence.

Prayer is a science that possesses powers to transform a man. If politeness can bring about success even in normal conduct, then it can be easily estimated how profound would be the impact of polite prayers that are directed to God.

When even one man begins to pray, though subtly, he would positively influence the environment and that would encourage others to follow. From one to another, and one day in this manner the ambience across the globe would get positively influenced. Using his simple imitative mind if a man can learn all sorts of evilness, then why won't he imbibe goodness likewise? When one nation today is mimicking the other, then who can say that if one nation adopts daily collective prayers as its nationwide programme, other nations would not follow it?

Prayer needs to be integrated into our daily life just like all other important activities. Activities like bathing, eating food etc are never ignored; likewise, praying also should never be forgotten. This divine process that unites the soul with God must be treated as a very important activity of daily life and must be carried out every day with sincerity.

It would be even better if something like a revolutionary programme is launched, to make every one understand the importance of prayers and to persuade all to adopt prayers into their lives. Then our India, enriched with faith and devotion, and beaming with the strength of prayers, would not just herself prosper but would make the whole world prosper.

Prayer can yield good results only when its philosophy and its true nature are properly understood.



# True Nature of Worship

**T**he Sanskrit word '*Upāsanā*' explains the most comprehensive meaning and purpose of 'worship'. The word *Upāsanā*<sup>2</sup> comprises of two words: *upa* and *āsana*. '*Upa*' stands for proximity and *āsana* stands for state. In simple terms *upāsanā* means to 'sit' near God. As near we ascend our state to the state of one whom we worship, as favorable and akin do we make ourselves to it, in the same proportion its capabilities, strengths and prowess would keep entering into ourselves and keep showering us with its sublime and perceivable attributes even if that center of worship is just an imaginary object.

## Chapter 2



Ghost has no existence but all know, that based upon a person's conviction and belief, ghost can actually conjure itself up as real in darkness and scare the wits out of him. If a make-believe ghost can drive some one crazy and kill him, then how is it possible that brimming with divine attributes and divine capabilities our object of worship wouldn't make our lives divine too?

Scientist Dr. Geldard, the writer of "*The Human Senses*"<sup>[2.1]</sup> has written in his book that the configuration (nature) of one's astral body influences one's mental and physical actions. By giving an example of a scientific experiment in support of this principle, he explains that human cells possess an impressive ability to attract favorable substances, to assimilate these by absorption and on this basis to replenish the energy that has been expended from the body. This was examined when a living portion of a body was cut and kept aside. A poisonous chemical was already kept at that place. Despite having no connection with the process of the brain, the molecules of that living part began to move away from the toxic object. Scientists were astonished when they observed this. They removed the poison from there immediately and in that place when they now put a beneficial medicine, the characteristics of the cells completely changed. They began to show an attribute of attraction to the medicine. In his analysis, Dr. Geldard states that each cell is a tiny substation that is connected to brain that is the main station.

An immediate unmistakable effect of whichever emotional wave arises in the brain begins to show in these cells. On the

same basis man gets influenced by invisible powers in the sky. By the magnetic powers of his mind he can attract and assimilate within him the power-flows from distant astral bodies and develop his own internal capabilities. Great *rishis* (seers and sages) of ancient India had realized these power-flows in the form of sublime currents of divine powers. Classifying them based upon their attributes, denoting them as different manifestation of the Supreme Force of God, the *rishis* had devised procedures for worshipping these as deities. Awakening their hidden faculties by practicing these procedures, they had attained tremendous physical and spiritual powers. Many people today may regard these possibilities as mere concoctions of mind, but results of studies establish that these are no fantasies but reality. Modern Scientists, who have investigated the deeper powers of the human mind, also affirm this reality.

Quantum theory in the form of an ultimate principle has agreed that matter gets converted from solid form to liquid, from liquid to gas, gas to plasma and further into similar kind of more subtilized light particles.... and so on.... Likewise, in the reverse order of manifestation of 'energy vibrations', the most evolved etheric particles of consciousness in a serial progression at one stage can express themselves in the form of matter. Scientist Heisenberg has put up a similar hypothesis. He writes about the existence of a domain in the universe where, if matter were left free it would on its own get converted into energy. Just as matter's existence is bound within the domain of time and form, likewise the manifested-existence of consciousness is expressed in the form of

feelings, memories thoughts and images. In spite of the great diversity in their peripheries and manifestation from sentient perceptions, mental conceptions to sublime realizations, all forms of existence of matter and consciousness are highly interwoven. They do not just affect each other but also assimilate into each other. Worship is meant to earn benefit from all components of Nature including the divine powers of Nature by enriching the hidden linkage of individual consciousness with them.

Renowned natural therapeutic Dr. Henry Lindlahr<sup>[2.2]</sup> in his book '*The Practice of Natural Therapeutics*' has accepted the fact that by connecting the human mental feelings with those of the Omnipresent, Eternal Consciousness Force (*Brahm*), some divine presence, invisible Angel, supernatural talents, or great *satguru*, or at the more earthly level even of some beloved ones, the sublime vibrations, divine messages or the thoughts and feelings may be grasped without any physical medium or process. Not only that, he also agrees that in such a situation the physical atomic and bodily experiences of one who is meditated upon also get attracted in an amazing manner.

If water of river Ganga is taken to another place by constructing a canal, all the attributes of its waters would go with it as far as the canal goes. In the same way our body, mind and feelings develop speedily. Remembrance of gurus, worship of deities and two incidents supporting this fact are now put forth in the form of evidence and witnesses. In the book '*An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*' the author

Prof. Thouless<sup>[2,3]</sup> has provided a truthful description of St. Catherine. At the time when Jesus Christ was crucified with nails on the cross, St. Catherine experienced the same pain at various places on her body as is inflicted when nails are hammered into the body. A doctor had to take care of her in that state. Diagnosis by doctors found that Catherine's experience of pain was genuine.

This is a result of harmonious mental linkage and deep union and between the worshipper and the worshipped. Not just particles of consciousness but inanimate bodies and that too beyond the limits of time and universe can be linked by deep bonding and in this way seemingly impossible information about incidents in the past and the future can be collected as well.

Scientists have also attempted to measure the power of the mind. According to them mind is the conscious force of physical body. According to Einstein's principle of relativity, a small amount of matter has a power equivalent to the square of the speed of light (1,86,000 miles per second). The amount of power that is generated by burning 14 lakh tons of coal is the same power that is contained in one pound of matter. If it were possible to completely convert matter into energy then the 'nuclear' energy generated by converting just one pound of coal would be sufficient to meet America's energy requirement for one full month.

Dr. Venetern calls mind as 'a great electrical force'. The Vedas describe the mind as *Jyotiṣām Jyotiḥ* (Light of all lights). Mind

is the electrical power of body's matter. The more the mind gets concentrated, the stronger its power would be. If it were possible to convert the entire physical body into energy then the electrical energy of a body of 100 pounds (which would get converted as capability of the mind) would be so much that it can provide electricity to the United States of America continuously for 10 years. Using this tremendous potential the Indian *Rishis* (yogis, seer-sages) used to cause explosions in void skies and without preaching anyone, just with their force of resoluteness could direct solutions to the human problems of the world.

Professor Elisha Gray<sup>[2.4]</sup> in his book '*Miracles of Nature*' has supported the aforementioned great potential of the mind and has described it as most powerful amongst all the known forces. According to Dr. Louis Crown thermal electricity can influence the physical matter only to a limit but 'thought electricity' can comprehensively influence the entire environment. Prof. Upton Sinclair<sup>[2.5]</sup> has written in his book titled '*Mental Radio*' that each person's brain is a powerful wireless set. Without any physical means a person can transmit his thoughts to another easily. At the same time he can develop his own self by keeping his brain, his mind open to superior thought-flows and divine messages. He can connect his self to the infinite, immeasurable source of happiness and joy.

In view of the above, we can now fathom the immense possibilities the engrossment of mind in *upāsana* offers. However, we don't see such outcomes for every devotee. So, a

natural question arises why and when *upāsanā* is not fruitful? A straight answer is - when it is done superficially or without interest.

### **When is *upāsanā* not pleasurable?**

When a person does not have faith in it or when he considers it as a special or extra duty different from his regular life style. With such a feeling, in a short time he begins to find worship unnecessary and useless and so in place of experiencing elation begins to feel exhausted and soon leaves the worship altogether.

This is a simple human nature that a person experiences annoyance in any activity that is not assimilated in his daily routine or he is not accustomed to doing it. Even in his regular routine daily work if some work increases as a sudden necessity, he would do it as if it is an uncalled for burden on him.

The same principle applies to *upāsanā* as well. So worship or *upāsanā* should not be a special obligation outside the daily routine but should be done as an integral part of the same. When *upāsanā* becomes an a natural part of life then fulfilling that gives as much pleasure as fulfilling any other need. Once it gets integrated with life then till it is performed the heart remains as impatient as in anticipation of meeting a beloved. Worship is an inseparable part of human life. This is the form in which it should be accepted. Taking up worship as a special obligation brings in a feeling of doing something other than

the routine. All along the thought persists that I am giving effect to some special task and thus concentration is not achieved, due to which desired pleasure is not gained. It is quite natural that the task that entails distaste and displeasure cannot be continued for long, and even if continued no great results could be anticipated.

*Upāsanā* does not evoke pleasure when it is carried out to fulfill some profit or greed too. When *upāsanā* is done with a selfish intent then the attention of the worshipper is directed towards his wants rather than towards who is being worshipped. One whose flow of feelings is directed towards his wants in place of his object of worship gets his greed fortified. This greed gradually grows unbounded and the process of *upāsanā* begins to fructify right in the opposite direction. Man turns fearsome for himself by transforming into a store of greed, wants, selfishness and desires. Anything going against his expectations appears to him as a consequence of 'some mistake' in *upāsanā* and what not...

In this manner when such misled worshippers due to their proximity to eagerness, dissatisfaction, sorrows and unhappiness eventually become their prey begin to find faults with *upāsanā* or the object of worship and make this conception that one who sincerely worships has to bear sorrows, hardships and poverty. Such conceptions are tremendous mistakes.

It can be safely assumed about any worshipper who is miserable, poor or lowly that greed is active in his *upāsanā*

that his greed, delusions or wrong approach have led him to this state. Else the immediate fruits of *upāsanā*, the divine attributes like brilliance, strength, self-discipline, sensitivity, etc, should have sprouted in him.

Additionally, expectations driven *upāsanā* also does not continue uninterrupted for too long. Such a worshipper keeps equating fruits of his endeavors in this regard with his expectations day by day; and when his desires do not get fulfilled he gradually gets weary, begins to consider *upāsanā* as a worthless activity and then losing all the interest in the same gives it up in the end. Such a worshipper leads a tragic life of a coward who is scared of death and has lost all hope in life.

Continuity of is also doubtful in case of those worshippers whose *upāsanā* is based upon elaborate rituals and show-off. For one, this kind of *upāsanā* takes up a lot of time, very little of which can a man usually spare in his busy life. Secondly, to collect the required variety of equipments and appliances a lot of money is needed. In these costly times when it has become difficult to just make ends meet, how can a man continue an expensive *upāsanā*? To continue it, an ordinary being would have to cut into some of family expenses which would certainly cause him or his family some sort of financial problems indirectly, if not directly. To meet expenses of *upāsanā* he would have to divert his attention to make adjustments to his domestic budget. So such *upāsanā* would translate into a financial planning, which may create more mental tension than any internal peace, and in such a situation it is doubtful that *upāsanā* would last too long.



Excessive ostentation and show off is not good for *upāsanā* either. A worshipper who lives unusual life is seen by the society as odd. Some look at him with curiosity, some with respect and others regard him as a great worshipper (*upāsaka*). Due to this, until the mental state of the *upāsaka* has ascended to a certain level, his mental feelings do not create the desired effect. By becoming a symbol of curiosity in the society, he keeps vacillating between times of extreme pleasure and sadness, which does not have beneficial effect on his *sādhana*. In addition, an ostentatious *upāsaka* considers himself as a special person in the society and regards himself more pious than other ordinary beings. Sometimes he needs to express such feelings to others to maintain this ostentation. Because he considers himself special and superior than others, pride begins to swell within him, which works like poison adulterated in the nectar of *upāsanā*.

To be normal from within along with being simple and normal from outside is more beneficial to an *upāsaka*. Due to their usual nature and value systems, most people get more attracted to ostentation. As a result, in place of paying attention to enhancing his dedication and devotional sentiments, the *upāsaka* gets trapped in the attraction of popularity in public and begins to pay attention to ostentation.

Lack of self-control on time and *sādhana*<sup>3</sup> is also one reason that does not bring about requisite seriousness in the *upāsaka*. The desired intrinsic values and sentimental impressions (*sanskaras*) do not get inscribed in the mind and

the brain which drive the *upāsanā* to regularity and depth and the *upāsaka* to spiritual benefits. To worship at any odd time is the same kind of religious or spiritual irregularity as that of food habits and lifestyle. Such irregular *upāsanā*, in place of making a person spiritually enlightened turns him into a spiritually sick; then to expect any peace or happiness from such an *upāsanā* would be an unusual fantasy.

Changing the deity (divine focus) of *upāsanā* means that you play with divine powers like toys without giving importance to their grace. This means that their importance depends upon your predilection. At the same time this alteration also exposes the feeling that you consider one divine power to be superior or inferior to another. Such feeling of inequality and lack of faith is very dangerous in the realm of *upāsanā*. With this kind of attitude, only mental fickleness increases and as a result neither does the mind settle into *upāsanā* nor does it bear any fruit.

True *upāsanā* is that which is performed without desires, which is directed towards one chosen deity believing it to be the abode of God's authority, adopting a single procedure, adopting self control; which is practised with a concentrated mind as an integral part of daily routine, and done with regularity and without ostentation. Such *upāsanā* continues uninterrupted life long and also bears fruit.

In this world all substances and all actions are only resources. The true goal of life is just one spiritual peace. If peace is lacking in one's soul then any amount of affluence, talent, or

power one may possess, any amount of respect or prestige he may have in the society, he cannot experience anything that termed as happiness.

In the absence of spiritual peace great kings and successful men who we believe have enjoyed all the worldly pleasures and accomplished life, have died a fearful death full of discontentment. Their soul leaves the body while they writhe in agony and they leave this world while crying disconsolately. When all the worldly pleasures and objects have been enjoyed, why cry when the end is near?

It is clear that there is discontentment in the soul of such men, which drives the soul back to the world again and again. Discontent lives where there is no soothing quietude. When the soul is afflicted with the fever of discontentment, there cannot be any coolness of peace in there.

It is not possible to attain peace of soul through worldly pleasures and objects. It is attained only when one inculcates the virtue of greatness in his way of life. Greatness is the sole basis for the peace of soul. Men with great souls never need to bear the torture of discontent or anguish even if they are poor or lonely. Wise, benevolent people and true devotees are always great humans with great souls. This is the single basis based on which they lead their lives, be that full of hardships, peacefully and part with their bodies with content. No mental distresses torture them. All the sages, saints, doers, thinkers and philosophers have never been rich or prosperous, nor have they devoted their lives to enjoyment of worldly

objects. Their lives have always been simple and ordinary. Their food, their clothing, and their living has always been as average as could be. Their daily routine and labour has been so arduous and demanding that to any one it would appear as suffering. In times ahead also this kind of people would live a life of dearth and those of this category present around us now can also be seen to have adopted such a living. Even then rarely can anyone be found as happy and contented as they are. There is just one reason behind this and that is the greatness of their soul. Whoever develops this greatness in his soul, spiritual peace certainly becomes his property. Who would like to remain stuck to the equipments that led him to his goal when he has already attained the goal itself? If light is available from the Sun, there remains no need to light a lamp.

The attribute of greatness that leads to peace of spirit is the attitude of goodness. Great men find goodness all around in the world, in every direction, in every incident and in every circumstance. He does a good deed only for goodness, and views and visualizes its result in all forms as good only. Hopelessness, dejection, regret, unhappiness, remorse or the suspicion of inauspiciousness or impossibility does not upset him. His mental state in prosperity and success remains the same in poverty and failure as well. His happiness, his bliss and his contentment are never perturbed.

With one look at the world, not one or two but hundreds of people can be seen making merry, talking and smiling and in a pleasant state. Looking at them, it would be difficult to say that in their lives there would be any pain or unhappiness, any

discord or discontentment. It may even appear that these all are men with great souls and they have attained spiritual peace, which is why such bliss abides on their faces.

But what is seen is not truth. Their happiness is just like someone is laughing or being happy in a dream or unconsciousness. This happiness of them is neither original nor permanent. That time either they are satiated with enjoyment of some object or charmed with some gain or profit. If the cause of their pleasure is identified and removed, then all their cheerfulness would be destroyed.

Real or spiritual happiness can only be that which has no cause, whose basis is the soul and nothing else. Happiness that is experienced from ephemeral and worldly enjoyments is a deception and so like other ephemeral illusions, its effect does not last too long. True and stable happiness is only that whose alternative never is sadness. One who has gained in his trade today, one who has got married today, or one who is blessed with a son today, one who has achieved great success or honor, would appear happy and pleased. This does not mean that any greatness of soul has been expressed through this cheerfulness. This happiness and cheer is a mere reaction to the said gain or festivity. It gets terminated at the passing of the wave of passion and the one gets back into his state of discontent and begins again to experience dejection, unhappiness, tension, etc as before....

That happiness which stays alike in gain and in loss, which is experienced in prosperity but stays the same in poverty, which

is awaken in favorable circumstances but does not get waned in adversities, can be called the true happiness, happiness that has originated from greatness.

Greatness of soul is attained by the *upāsanā* of the Supreme Soul. An atheist or a spiritual person may gain any amount of prosperity, any object or pleasures, but he cannot attain enlightenment and elevation of the soul. Whatever in this world is good, is great, is glorious and benevolent is all the Great Father's adornment. It all ends in Him and rests in Him. Beauty of the universe, prosperity of the earth, riches of the seas, the taste of vegetables, the potency of medicines, the brilliance of stars and planets, the enjoyment of seasons, and man's capacity to experience behind all these lies the grace of the Supreme Soul. Whatever is superior and great in this world has been regarded as the subtle hint of the presence of Supreme Soul. All the beauty is attributable to the Supreme Soul, all auspiciousness is due to Him. So to attain spiritual greatness one must perform *upāsanā* of the Supreme Soul rather than running behind worldly possessions.

The meaning of *upāsanā* is to sit near; have nearness or company. When we stay close to something, the qualities of that would come to us naturally. A cold piece of iron placed near a hot piece of iron would itself become hot by absorbing the heat from the other. Objects coming in contact with ice turn cold themselves. In a jungle a tree growing near a sandalwood tree acquires the scent of sandalwood due to its contact and the objects that come in contact with light also get illuminated. Contact, proximity or nearness has been

regarded as an important cause for acquisition of good or bad qualities among humans as well.

A person engrossed in *upāsanā* is very close to the Supreme Soul and as a result keeps inculcating supreme virtues. Supreme Soul is the exclusive source and embodiment of all the greatness and preeminent qualities. So these attributes begin to arrive and start assimilating in the devotee as well. There is no reason why a man who is near snow-capped mountains would not experience the chill. That a mind and body would not turn fragrant in a garden filled with flowers is not possible. Who ever attains closeness of the Supreme Soul by *upāsanā* and stays close to His Light, it is absolutely natural and imperative that the attributes and greatness of the Supreme Soul would be transferred to him.

Millions of people can be seen daily performing prayers and rituals. They also feel that they are performing *upāsanā*. Several other men also believe and regard them as *upāsaka*. But this *upāsanā* of theirs never succeeds in providing the desired results. Neither do they attain any greatness nor any spiritual peace. Even after their prayers and rituals they speak lies, display cunningness, remain enslaved in anger, greed and attachment, and as a result they neither attain mental calmness nor any spiritual contentment. As they are, they continue to suffer from grief, unhappiness, torture, pain, doubts, dearth and discontentment. They continue to remain sick with worldly passions and thralldoms as always. The divine qualities of the Supreme Soul that are commonly denoted by the names of love, brotherhood, mercy, dearness,

bliss and peace etc are not found in them. Despite thinking (and talking about) of the Almighty hundreds of times these people remain blank like the trunk of a barren tree; neither new leaflets bloom, nor any blossoming flowers occurs in them.

It is an absolute truth that by performing *upāsanā* of the Supreme Soul the noble virtues of God get transferred into the individual self, there is no denying this fact. A person who is seen to perform *upāsanā* but no signs of refinement towards greatness are visible in him then any wise man can undoubtedly proclaim that the *upāsanā* of this fellow is not a true *upāsanā* but merely a ritual, a show off, an ostentation, a mockery....

The true meaning of *upāsanā* is to link the inner self with the Supreme Soul. Just as using some system when an empty reservoir is connected to a filled reservoir, the water begins to flow from the filled one into the empty one and the latter also gets filled up like the former. In the same way by establishing contact with the Supreme Soul all His divine greatness deigns to flow into the sole of the *upāsaka*. But if some obstruction were placed in this connection, the flow would stop. Water would not reach reservoir and man would not attain greatness.

Cold iron receives heat from fire when it comes near it. But if a board of wood is placed between it and fire then iron would be deprived of the heat of fire. In the same way, in the process of *upāsanā* when the obstacle of doubts and desires is put



between the soul and the Supreme Soul, man gets deprived of receiving the grace of the Supreme Soul. It can be assumed about a devotee in whom inculcation of Supreme Soul's attributes is not seen that between his soul and the Supreme Soul lie the obstacles of desires, wants, passions, and delusions and unless these hindrances are removed, the true fruits of *upāsanā* cannot be attained. Of all the people that pray and perform rituals, most do not perform *upāsanā*, but they only make a show or imitation of it. Either they are driven by ignorance and emotional excitement or the thought of displaying their importance through *upāsanā* pervades their minds. Or the objective of their *upāsanā* is fulfillment of some desire and not the attainment of the Supreme Soul.

The long cherished aim of human life is to attain spiritual peace. The bases of this peace are those attributes, which are the natural qualities of the Supreme Soul and can be attained only through *upāsanā*. But the true *upāsanā* is that which is done only for its own sake without any other motive. Begin doing *upāsanā*, which is free from all expectations, to establish contact between your soul and the Supreme Soul. And by attaining divine light and greatness experience the infinite *upāsanā* and the life that is brimming with the grace of indestructible peace and unalloyed happiness.

Every feeling, thought, action and object becomes a form of *upāsanā* — in order to attain that high state it is our pious duty that daily we must continue (for a short time at least), to perform *upāsanā* of the Supreme Soul with a true and devoted mind. This apparently small effort of *upāsanā* when becomes

an integral part, an essential requirement of our life and when its absence begins to cause discomfort, then in this practice of *upāsanā* itself would start inducing the joy, the eagerness, the inner force of the individual self (to unite with its Supreme Origin). The effect of this enriched feeling and bliss of *upāsanā* would then sustain during the entire long period of the day and for all that time we would experience the proximity of the Supreme Soul.

This way our brief attempt of *upāsanā* would gradually mature and assimilate internally, its effect would augment, deepen and sustain for longer and longer periods and if our sincerity and emotional depth in this *upāsanā* simultaneously get enhanced in greater proportions, then there is no doubt that through this brief *upāsanā* we would enter into the state where the self identity, the beings and the whole world appears to be contained in God and God appears to be pervaded in everything, every where in the world. Each action and reaction, feeling and thought, even the inhalation and exhalation of breath begins to be experienced as a form of God.

What's that prayer which is aimed to overcome sufferings and to satisfy selfish desires? It is no better than begging. True prayer is that which is offered to enhance more and more the internal riches of devotion and bliss. For most people, when sufferings do not mitigate and selfish desires are not fulfilled mental irritation develops towards prayer. The whole basis of their prayers appears to be wrong. True prayer in fact continuously fills up our pot of incompleteness. A true

devotee would find satisfaction in watching his inner pot filled up more today than it was yesterday. In an effort to reach near the *saccidānanda* (eternal source and embodiment of absolute bliss and divine light) how can *upāsana* result in any despair or annoyance? Every step taken in the direction of bliss must generate happiness only. Distortion of the basis leads us astray and annoyance is the results of that.

Prayer ascends us higher and takes us up to meet those who are already (spiritually) evolved. The object/deity of our prayer must be such that one who reaches near that forgets crying and learns to smile, and through his laughter makes the whole neighboring environment laugh too.

Discontentment and sorrows are not our goals or objects of our aspirations. Then why should we carry out an *anuṣṭhāna* (a mode of *sādhana*) or *āvahāna* (invocation) and *visarjan* (ritual of completion of *upāsana*) of these? While marching towards the supreme element our every step would take us closer and closer to truth, benevolence and beauty. An engrossed mind and bliss are blessings in themselves. Easy attainment of these blessings is obstructed by contemplation of discontentment. If prayer has to be done at all, why not adopt content and happiness and tie a knot with these with a devoted and engrossed mind.

Prayer can never be a solicitation; it originates and is inspired by the feeling of surrender. People have seen benefits of receiving but have not understood the pleasure of giving. No gain or satisfaction can be compared with the glory that we

attain by performing the supreme sacrifice of surrendering ourselves to God.

When our desires get dispersed and God's wishes begin to take their place, then it should be believed that our prayers are attaining success in the same proportion. God's vision takes place in this same form that He eliminates all the ugliness (vices) from the inner self and illumines it with His beauty. In other words, in place of wishes like mitigation of sufferings and fulfillment of selfish desires those noble ideals get established which in the form of enlightened engrossed of mind and bliss of heart spread their rejuvenating fragrance everywhere, every moment. One who adopts God's wishes as his own and then follows those, begins to feel that the supreme element is itself coming to him and that his journey is nearing to its ultimate aim.

What words should be used for prayers? Sitting where do these calls get heard? Reaching where can we sight our chosen deity? Answers to such questions cannot be obtained by searching for any procedure or place in the sentient world. Voice does not reach Him. Physical objects offered in the 'procedures of worship' also get scattered all around in no time. Places may be naturally special in some way but the light that dispels all doubts of the soul cannot be found anywhere. What eyes cannot see at all, at which place can that be seen?

The nearest place to gain closeness with the supreme element is your own *antah-karāṇa* (inner self). That is where the power of all *mantras*, which arises with the call of the soul, works. It

is not essential that these be taught by ancient scripts or told by the spiritual *gurus*. When the soul reaches near the Supreme Soul then the limits of languages are broken and the feeling of communion itself begins to sound just like the words of speech. There is no more appropriate place than your own *antah-karana* for this meeting. True prayer is one that converts your selfish desires into altruistic sensitivity. When the urgency to give rather than receive begins to overcome every other impulse of mind, it can be said that blessings of your chosen deity have begun to enshower upon you.


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# 'O' God the Supreme! Sanctify Us

*Om viśvāni deva savitarduritāni parāsuva  
yadbhadram tanna āsuv. Rik 5| 2|5*

h God, the creator of the whole world, take away the sins and vices of us all and grant us thoughts that are benevolent. Oh ocean of mercy, inspire our inner mind and hearts and make them pure and illumined.

In the above *richa* from Rigveda the *rishi* has prayed to the Supreme God. His first prayer is that God the Supreme may first remove our sins. It is quite natural that if we bring in hard earned articles we first think about how to store them. We create a proper place for them. When a farmer harvests his crop and thrashes out

## Chapter 3

the grains, he does not throw the grains around everywhere without care. He prepares a storeroom for grains months in advance by cleaning it and purifies the same by burning *Neem* leafs, etc. Nowadays for sanitizing the grain stores different types of chemicals are available. Grain thus stored does not get infested by insects. Rainwater does not harm and the stored material remains safe as desired. However, if due to lethargy we throw the hard earned material anywhere without any thought for its protection, we shall face the consequences very soon. Grain may get infested by insects or may begin to rot due to moisture. Thus by not taking a little precaution, we may lose all that we earned by months of labour.

It has been the first concern of our *rishis*<sup>4</sup> that before any energy of thought and intellect is gained as a boon from devotion to God and *tapa*<sup>5</sup>, Oh! God, wane out all our accumulated sins. Sins are nothing but mental tendencies that are ingrained in our subconscious mind due to our fallacious, vicious deeds and thoughts in the past. Whenever occasion arises these tendencies ride on our ego and mislead our intellect. When our intellect gets misguided then, driven by these intrinsic tendencies, we indulge in acts that we do not like ourselves. But we become helpless due to our habits and hidden force of the accumulated instincts. Hence the *rishi* is wary of such tendencies and prays to Almighty for the first boon that — “God! Liberate us from our sinful tendencies. Till these persist, neither will we be able to do any worship nor render any noble deeds”

After removal of sins, the *rishi* prays that may benevolent thoughts arise in our minds. Our senses execute such

.....'O' God the Supreme! Sanctify Us

thoughts in the form of acts. Won't such acts be benevolent if they are supported by our intellect and discretion? They will be, if they are due to a mental upsurge. It is worth noting that while conceiving this *mantra* through his angelic acumen, the *rishi* has kept in mind the welfare of everyone. Whatever he has prayed for, he has done it in plurals, i.e. as a representative of the entire society and of the period, and has not prayed just for himself or for any individual. It is quite natural that if everyone or the whole society gets benefited, our welfare will also not be excluded. Hence the feeling of "world-is-one-family" must have been imbibed in the *rishi's* mind. Otherwise the *rishi* would have prayed, oh God! may good thoughts arise only in myself.

But can anybody live in peace by gaining boons while indulging in a self-centered prayer? Never. We earn a lot of wealth, create big palaces and by God's grace good thoughts also arise in us, but if our neighbors turn more sinful day-by-day and their miseries and ill-will keeps growing, then the consequences of conduct of the society will have to be borne by us too, even if we may be great devotees of God. Neighbours will envy our wealth. They will envy our state of happiness and some day may indulge in robbery and ruin us. In contrast if wealth does not increase, but in the neighbourhood all people begin to think good and become benevolent, there will be heaven even in poverty. Jointly we all will spend our lifetime in happiness.

This elevated state of mind belongs to human beings only and distinguishes them from animals. Our whole social structure rests only on this one prayer of the *rishi*. If suddenly these



feelings of good thoughts disappear from amongst us, this entire prosperity will get destroyed. There will be no development as well. As we see in animals, they do not have this concept of collective interest. Each is out to fill its stomach. Of course ants and bees are exceptions. On the other hand, there is man. Weaver weaves cloth, soldier protects and lives and dies for the security of the nation, scientist labours day and night for research, engineer develops, and likewise people in different occupations also work for others. Directly we see that in human society we all serve one another, and indirectly needs of all get adequately fulfilled. This way moves our society. We are developing day by day. Our means of conveniences and pleasures are increasing. The only reason behind all this development is that benevolent thoughts reside in our minds.

But the day benevolent thoughts and sentiments get removed from the man's heart, narrowness and hatred alone will begin to occupy our minds and then no one can prevent disaster. In Tretayug the whole population of an island got destroyed only due to Ravan's devilish arrogance. In Dwaparyug the terrible war of Mahabharat took place only due to malevolent thoughts and selfish desires of Duryodhan. The first and second world wars were also results of malevolent thoughts only. Hence our *rishis* already knew that praying for anything else other than enlightened thoughts is meaningless, because if the states of our mind are not good, every possession of ours could become a cause of hardship for us. On the contrary if benevolent feelings are everywhere then all useful means of happiness would automatically become available to us. Hence the *rishi* prays to God to enrich us, that is, our whole society, with noble thoughts.

The main wealth that *rishi* has prayed for is of divine illumination thoughts. But this boon of thoughts will be fruitful only when it is again protected from the heat of sins by means of purity and righteous thinking. With a lot of effort we have brought home seeds of some rare tree and now we want to taste its fruit by planting them in the field. For this it is necessary to first plough the field and then make complete arrangements to protect it. It is not enough to only prepare the field and arrange for protection; we need to arrange for irrigation too. Finally the *rishi* again prays to God that may our inner souls continue to remain pure. When inner heart continues to be pure then the good thoughts inspired by the Almighty will get converted into good deeds and these good deeds would provide good results to the whole society. So all would be prosperous and happy and we also would derive benefits. Therefore, praying for collective enlightenment of the entire society, purification of everyone's inner-self - is the best.

The great *rishi* Yagyavalkya decided to renounce his home after distributing his whole property equally to his both wives. Maitreyi was not satisfied and finally she asked the *rishi*, "My lord, will I gain salvation by taking all this? Will I turn immortal? Will I attain spiritual contentment?" The *rishi* interrupted his thought process and said, "No. It will not be so. Your life will continue to be full of wealth and comforts in future in the same way as it has been till now. Like other worldly people, you will also be able to spend your life in prosperity."

Maitreyi was not satisfied and she asked, “*Yenāham nāmatā syām kimham tena kuryām* what use is it to take what does not give me immortality. I do not want this worldly life of prosperity and conveniences, my lord!”

The great *rishi* enquired, “Then what do you want, Maitreyi?” And Maitreyi's eyes were full of tears. Her heart was overwhelmed from within. That day Maitreyi laid down her head at the feet of the great *rishi* and said -

“*Asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā jyotirgamaya, matyormā amatamgamaya, Aavirāvirmā edhi rudra yattedakṣiṇa mukham tena mām pāhi nityam.*”

“Oh God, take me from untruth to truth, elevate me from darkness to light and from death to eternal life! Oh Light! Become the source of the eternal glow (of inspiration in my heart) and enlighten my life. Destroy darkness of all my sins and ignorance by becoming *Rudra* for me. Grant me the sight of your blissful soul-form which is full of love, in whose shadow I get shelter till eternity.”

Maitreyi had spent her life full of happiness and prosperity in the company of the great *rishi* but this query of her heart had remained unanswered. She had attained no solution to this inner quest so far.

Whole life we accumulate wealth, prosperity, luxuries, property, cash, various items, valuable materials and provide the same to Maitreyi seated in our hearts and say to her, “Take! This will make you happy, give you pleasure.” We

accumulate all sorts of material but Maitreyi in our hearts keeps on asking, "*Yenāham nāmatā syām kimham tena kuryām?*" In all these materials, solution to the eternal query of life is not there and she continuously longs for that quintessence of soul-reality which would provide her the true, enlightened eternity, which would protect her from everywhere and provide her unlimited, unalloyed happiness.

Maitreyi desired the soul-revelation, undistracted vision and the feeling of oneness with that Supreme Element which is Absolute Truth and Light itself, which could become eternal light of her life. Which like the Rudra-form of Lord Shiva, could destroy all her sins and bless her ultimate protection and salvation from all fears, ignorance and sorrows.

Maitreyi had learnt from her experience that this world and all its materials and relationships are perishable and their end results are darkness and untruth. Bodily, mental and materialistic sins and their ill effects always keep the soul impatient and in fear.

Man collects different materials, equipment etc., accumulates wealth and property, raises large palaces, and dresses up and beautifies his body in many ways. Immersed in organizing all this day and night, man develops affinity and attraction for them. Gradually this practice becomes so intense that he begins to regard these materials, equipments, relations as everything and continues his life with their support. But as per rules of the world, these material objects are lost every moment or keep getting modified. World and its materials keep getting built and keep getting destroyed. None of these

is imperishable. Even man's body falls off one day like a leaf from a tree. Even that does not stay. Whatever is visible in this world is all unreal, destructible and full of darkness.

By taking support of all these, man every moment experiences their separation, change, and modification, and along with all the ups and downs of life, eventually experiences death. Whatever was assumed as true turns out to be untrue like a dream. Nothing but darkness prevails after the artificial light extinguishes. Every moment man continues to only wander in death, untruth and darkness. Fear, uncertainty, sadness, sins and their outcome do not allow him to remain still even for a moment. This sequence of progression continues unabated and there is no end it....

Therefore beyond all these objects, materials, property and prosperity Maitreyi desired of something which is totally free from the destiny of destruction and darkness and after attaining that there would be no question of leaving or modifying it. That eternity which is beyond death, which is absolute, true, and which is all light and divine is what desired Maitreyi.

But we search for this eternity in the materialistic world by power and extrovert intellect and try to measure and examine it. We collect various materials and tell Maitreyi seated in our hearts "Take these oh Goddess! Accept these and enjoy life", but every time expressing her dissatisfaction she enquires, "Will this render me eternity? No? Then this after all is not that what I want. *Yenāhaṁ nāmataṁ syāṁ kimhaṁ tena kuryām?* Whatever does not render me eternity, what is its utility to

-----'O' God the Supreme! Sanctify Us

me?" And uninterruptedly with tearful eyes and impatient heart she prays again and again — "*Asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā jyotirgamaya, matyormā amatamgamaya, Aavirāvīrmā edhi rudra yattedakṣiṇa mukhaṁ tena mām pāhi nityam.*"

Oh eternal truth! Oh truth, present in me and everywhere around, take me out from the bounds of falsehood and assimilate me in your infinite radiance. Remove the illusory curtain of this world and take me in to your perennial palace, which is cast in truth, where exists nothing else but you.

'*Jyotiṣām yad jyotiḥ*' Oh Light Supreme amongst all lights of the whole universe! Your preeminent glow pervades everywhere, like the radiance of millions and millions of sun. Oh Light Supreme! Enlighten me by your pious touch so that I get liberated from all bonds of darkness and become the supreme light myself.

"Oh pious elixir of joy! Source of supreme bliss! Only you exist everywhere as undying, indestructible, unlimited. This world gets created, exists and eventually gets destroyed in you only, but you continue to be serene and stable always. You have no form, no limits or age. Assimilate me in your eternal existence and make me also eternal.

"Oh Light Divine, brighten me fully by your incessant glow. Enlighten me absolutely by eliminating all darkness of selfishness, ego, attraction and affinity.

"Oh Rudra! Extinguish all my sins by the immense heat of your pure radiance. Destroy whatever sins evil desires, evil thoughts, evil actions etc that exist in my internal and external life by your *rudra*<sup>6</sup>-brightness. Then there will be nothing but the unblemished regime of your preeminent light only left within me. Oh God! Oblige me by granting me your happy, sweet, enchanting view. Oh God! Then by becoming your abode I will be liberated from everywhere."

Let us listen attentively to this prayer of Maitreyi the soul seated within us. Let us sing in tune with it. Let this prayer emanated from inner quest, intense desire, offered with tearful eyes not be any type of bargain nor any give and take, nor like an item collected for decoration. While dwelling in the world let us accept only that which will satisfy the eternal desire of our soul. Let it attain the true, incessant light. Let us leave out what does not grant us *ultimate* liberation.

Let the mantra '*Yenāham nāmatā syām kimham tena kuryām*' be our slogan of life.

Man of today compared to earlier times has become more fearsome for himself. He has sown in his heart so many seeds of ill will, dispute, cunningness, jealousy and passions and lavishness that his fragrant garden of heart has turned into a poisonous desert. The main reason for this is his the strong force of his *kāma* - sensual desires.

The stronger the lust of an individual, the poorer he is. His impatience grows by the same amount as his mind runs after the multifarious cravings. This variety of cravings alone leads

him only to decline; no good-intentions can be expected from such a person who is headed for downfall. His contentedness is destroyed and thus he feels that all beings in the world are happier than him. He starts cultivating jealousy towards others and gets irritated with himself. He is always dissatisfied with everything, which generates a lot of anger in him. Due to this anger and lack of discretion he declines towards his total destruction at a quick pace.

To prevent his destruction man should control his untoward passions and cravings. The rule of nature in this regard is such that more the efforts to satisfy the worldly cravings, the more these increase. Hence their renunciation is the only solution to get rid of them.

These cravings and lusts are not like a cane in hand that falls off by itself the moment the grip on it is loosened. Rather, these are blemishes of many past lives, which accumulate and subtly shield mirror of heart. This smog and mist has to be washed off by wiping out again and again. Just as dirt cannot be cleaned up by dirt, so also these cravings cannot be washed off by beastly instincts and sensual desires. To wash them off pure feelings will be needed.

Amongst pure feelings of a humane heart, the feeling of compassion is of the highest order. Man should develop in himself more and more of empathic sensitivity. Empathy is a divine quality; it awakens the light of the soul. As soon as it rises, all mental illness, and weaknesses of man get washed off and his mirror of heart gets lighted up with the heavenly



brightness, in which he can view the Supreme Soul in the form of his soul.

To develop this empathy man has to at first worship mercy, kindness with complete politeness. There is no religion or sect in the world, which does not give importance to the qualities like politeness, mercy, forgiveness, sympathy etc.

To gain empathy man has to take shelter in God, the abode of empathy. Man has to go under His protection with all courteousness, lovingly fill His creation with mercy. He has to embrace courteousness.

All these qualities get earned instantly by recalling God with intense submission. Remember Him, call Him, remind Him about yourself, request Him, pray Him and surrender your to Him.

Requesting and praying worldly persons brings in man that inferiority, which renders the soul maligned and weak. But in contrast requesting and praying the Almighty brings in that submission, which enlightens the soul and renders light to it.

In your request and prayer if you beg God for means of physical pleasures then you will get deviated from the route to your destination of inculcating compassion. You will again get headed towards the same desires of objects, to get rid of which you had initiated call to God. If at all you have to beg, then beg only for your aim, otherwise pray only for its pleasure. There is no worldly or divine material of any type, which cannot be gained by His grace. But still out of whatever

is gained from Him you should attract the riches of great qualities and virtuous tendencies and try to expand them more and more.

Prayer is the simplest means to please God. At a definite time of the day with pure body and mind pray to Him through your heart and with the feeling complete submission. Let the words of prayer generate more and more empathy, be simple and sweet and their meaning be absolutely pious, without desires and filled with His merciful names. Let their meaning generate one desire-less pleasure. Let its tune be simple to sing and charming. Prayers can, of course, be in prose also, but expression of feelings cannot be so beautifully done in prose as in verse. Greater the assimilation of feelings of heart in your prayer, more the intensity of involvement, the faster will you be able to gain empathy and mercy of Supreme God.

There is no need to sing the prayer loudly. If at all you want to sing it, sing it with such uniform voice/tone that it does not put your throat to any great strain and all the same it is heard clearly by yourself.

Be carefree at the time of praying, get involved with a concentrated mind forgetting the whole world in such a way that nothing remains for you at that time besides prayer. Mental and emotional engrossment is the basic requirement in prayer.

The more intensely you remember the Supreme Soul, He will remember you with the same intensity. More and more you get attracted towards Him, that much more will He get

attracted towards you. In this way mutual attraction from both sides shall soon remove obstacles and distance in between, and you will be able to see His presence in your own soul in the form of unalloyed joy.

There is a very great importance of prayer in *upāsana*. There has been no great soul or preacher of religion in the world who has not adopted God's prayer in one form or the other. Even the different manifestations of God pray to each other. Lord Vishnu prays Lord Shiva, Shiva prays to Vishnu; both Lords Brahma and Vishnu offer prayer to Lord Shiva, while Vishnu and Shiva pray to Brahma. No goal can be accomplished without prayer to the Supreme Soul. Mahatma Gandhi used to say "prayer is my life source, my life. I can leave food, leave water, leave all things of the world, but cannot leave prayer. By praying I feel the happiness, peace, strength and completeness inside me. When there is delay in my prayer or for any reason I am not able to perform prayer, then that day becomes the worst day for me. I feel as if I am without life and have become weak. I feel as if I have done nothing, nor am I capable of doing anything. Inside me I start feeling a terrible emptiness. After performing prayer all weaknesses vanish instantly and I start feeling completeness all again within." He also stated "I am able to bear all sadness, all sufferings and all conflicts smilingly on the strength of prayer. I never get a feeling that I am in any conflict or suffering. In every way I remain happy and full of delight."

What this means is that in prayer all the strength and all the pleasures abide. Amongst all the reasons of Mahatma Gandhi's

success, prayer is the main. With the spiritual strength of prayer only he led such a big nation, won the war of freedom, and tied the followers of various religions into the thread of unity. With this inner strength alone he won over the various big materialistic foreign statesmen.

Every living being has the merciful boon of the Supreme Soul. God goes on bestowing his inexhaustible mercy on every living being without any discrimination. He has enshowered many types of merciful boons at every step for enhancement of pleasure and for elimination of sufferings of living beings. Activities of life of the living beings go on with the help of these only. If the magnificent creation of body and mind had not been done in such a nice way, the existence of living beings itself would not have appeared, nor would they have been able to enjoy the essence of life in a natural way. In other words, the happy sustenance and welfare of living beings becomes possible only with the grace and support of Almighty's mercy

It is quite proper for man, the gainer of God's unending mercy and empathy, that he continues to prove his due eligibility by giving out a part of that merciful boon to the other helpless, handicapped and backward people. Of course it is not possible to repay God for his mercy, but at least it is possible that we continue to express our heartfelt gratitude to make His weak children happy and prosperous and continue to make sincere efforts for welfare of society to the extent possible for us.

Compassion should get transformed into sympathy and heartfelt feelings. Only those feelings are fruitful which are transacted into actions. There is a lot of suffering in the world. If we are able to share a part of others' sufferings and are able to heal the hearts of the depressed, it will be greatness that is expected of man. Prayer to God is not just the hummed or repeated words brought out at the time of worship. Real prayer is that which takes the shape of unending well wishes for others and gets expressed in the form of altruistic sensitivity and sympathy to help all living beings.

Let us pray to God - beg of him only one thing - that He may emanate in our inner self a tiny spring of that magnanimous compassion, in which He bathes all living beings and continues without any bounds to make them happy, prosperous and progressive.

God is all-powerful and the reason worldly man wants to develop relations and contact with that Almighty is that he can take its advantage in fulfilling his selfish needs. This is why in spite of being so near this Omnipotent source man continues to remain in the same state and degrades himself in the sight of the Supreme Lord.

The cooperation of any great and reputed person is expected only worth his dignity and he is approached only with that type of prayer/proposal. But people think of approaching God only with their petty desires and small wants, and pray for their fulfillment.

Prayer is not begging of something from God, but people keep begging only for worldly acquisitions like son-heir, wealth-prosperity, name-respect, etc in their 'prayers' to God. This contrast appears because of not understanding the meaning of prayer. Whatever God was able to give to His dear child, He has already given in the best form. Now He wants to see whether His child has understood the value of those gifts or not. Has he or has he not been able to utilize in the best possible way the available resources and powers? In spite of when He sees His child crying, cringing, petitioning....., He must be feeling dejected sometimes to see that all the precious gifts that He bestowed upon man and upon no other living being in this world have gone waste, simply because man could not appreciate their worth.

There is a famous story about a devotee to whom his guru gave a touchstone for some time and told him that he remove his poverty using it. The devotee did not know what use should he put the touchstone to. So for one year he continued to use the stone as a weight for weighing. After one year when the guru returned he thought that his devotee by now must have become quite prosperous. But he was disheartened to see that his devotee is still sitting in a shabby shop weighing things and cursing his poverty.

On asking what did he do with the touchstone, the reply of the disciple was - It was a great convenience in weighing any item. Earlier he used to weigh things with pieces of brick-stones that caused problems. Now it has become quite convenient to weigh objects with this stone.

Seeing this, the guru felt very sorry for his disciple's intelligence. Similar pity the Supreme Soul must be feeling when He sees the man crying and complaining even after He has bestowed upon him the best of things, powerful resources and enormous capabilities. For sure these conveniences and resources have been provided so that with their help man lives his life with ease and enhances the adornment and beauty of the 'garden' of the Supreme Creator.

Prayer should be resorted to only for extermination of this satan in soul and for establishing close contact, relation, nearness with the Supreme Soul, whose eternal part man is. By establishing oneness with the Almighty whose part he is, he can also become as capable as Him. Several small rivulets and drains themselves become rivers by merging with rivers. Fuel takes the shape of fire by getting into fire, rivers become ocean by getting into the ocean. Merging of rivulets into river, meeting of river with ocean and entrance of fuel into fire converts them into that form. Exactly like that prayer should also make man merge with his final destination. The union of an insignificant with the enormous is possible by means of a movement, an effort only. Prayer also can be termed as a driving support, a medium, which enables the journey from pettiness to greatness, miniscule to infinite, and from mortal beings to the Omnipotent. This is the only meaning of prayer, not begging. Only such a prayer can become a source of immense spiritual power.



# *Definite Beneficial Results of Sincere Prayer-Upāsanā*



**G**od alone can be the focus of a prayer or *upāsanā*. That Almighty is Omnipresent and extremely merciful. He has knowledge of everybody's needs and desires. Being the supreme parent and magnanimously kind He wants to fulfill our desires too. Any fairly merciful father of ordinary level also is keen and ready to fulfill the wants and needs of children. Then being the supreme parent and infinitely merciful why will He not know our needs. Only on our expressing if He comes to know of our requirement, and on praying only if He understands our difficulties then such

## *Chapter* **4**



an assumption will amount to bringing down His status of That Omniscient. When He fulfills the needs of insects, birds and animals without asking, why will he not pay heed to His beloved son, His crown prince? In fact prayer does not at all mean begging. Begging is shameful in itself, as it incorporates tendencies of helplessness, incompetence and dependency, which does not improve but in fact diminishes the graceful glow of self-respect. It is all the same whether a begging hand is produced before a man or a begging bag is spread in front of God. Whether theft is committed in a man's house, or in temple - God's home - a bad deed will be a bad deed. Any action that damages self-reliance or self-respect - even if it is called prayer - does not befit a capable being like man.

In fact, the purpose of prayer is to make one's soul understand that it, being a symbol of Supreme Soul, should become capable so that necessary qualities are easily acquired compatible with its capability and worth its dignity. Offering prayers is also an attempt of gratifying the mind, convincing it; it is an effort towards refining oneself, awakening oneself. By praying, the inner self is told

Oh! The unbounded source of Power, why don't you get awakened? Why don't you turn your qualities, work-nature on noble path of ascent? If you get saved, whole world will get saved. If you become free of dirt and vices the purity of the whole world will automatically get attracted to you. If you get engrossed in preparing for excelling your capabilities and in beneficial use of gains, then how can there be any need to sit in line with those who are helpless and destitute? Then why should your level be lower than

that of the dignified children of God, who are capable and who donate?

By means of prayer we develop intense contact with worldwide greatness, experience the ideals as God's divine expression, and awaken the pleasurable feelings of joining with it. Lethargy and lack of knowledge have taken root in the field of mind covered by darkness. Non-recall of self has rendered is in a shameful state. To eliminate the maligned feelings and closed, dormant minds engulfing the life, let us pray our inner heart to inspire and activate it to leave aside sleepiness and ignorance and awaken with grace. If one starts thinking what is expected of him, starts doing what he should do then all problems will be solved. If one ray of Inner Light sparks, all the darkness that obstructs the steps to one's rising will get eliminated and all the masks of misery and gloom spread everywhere will be wiped out.

Though God is witness, viewer, destiny maker, creator, director, all in all but we should regard that part of Him, which we pray, as complete soul and pious soul only. Considering the periphery of life confined to satisfaction of hunger and procreation and driven by ill desires and thirst for sensual pleasures and false ego only is termed as *Maya*. To enlarge the field of self-interest by liberating attraction and love from the bindings of worldly interest is the real self-improvement. This expansion of the 'self' leads to self-realization. In *upāsana*, we pray to our higher-level 'real self', to the Supreme Soul that He may enshower mercy and generate such a spark of radiance, which transmutes the darkness pervading within and around us into divine light.

The intense longing for submission of smallness into largeness pettiness into greatness is named prayer. The determination to convert man into Supreme Being human being into Super Human is called prayer. When the narrowness obstructing the soul expands and sees the form of Supreme Soul in it, then it should be understood that effect of prayer has taken place. When man starts ascending to divinity by getting lifted from a level of animal life, then this should be regarded as sign and miracle of depth of prayer. Submission of self-identity is regarded as essential part of prayer. We can obtain something from anybody only by belonging to him. Self-submission is the only single way of attempting total immersion into God's aura. Taking refuge (in the holy feet of God) is regarded as the main sign of devotion. In Gita, God has assured that - "the one who comes to My refuge with trueness in heart, I take on Myself the responsibility of his *Yoga Kséma* his well-being and progress..." The difference of taking refuge with trueness in heart and with falseness in heart is quite clear; total submission can't be achieved superficially.

To use the 'flowery language' of submitting body, mind and wealth everything at the feet of God at the time of prayer and then practice the contrary in conduct, forgetting or leaving aside all promises - is prayer with falseness in heart. This is the fashion today. The way, to trap any simple girl, a lustful person shows large green pastures and makes big promises knowing that he does not have to fulfill this assurance pledges, in the same way the prayer with falseness in heart is for deceiving God. One, who understands the meaning of the levels of submission and

taking refuge, must also be knowing that its purpose is only to convert one's worldly desires into God's wishes - to modify one's present conduct by liberating one's activities from the grips of lust, desires, expectations with the help of uplifted thinking and ideal deeds according to God's wishes. By getting ready for this, one, who talks of submission and taking refuge, can be called the one performing prayer with trueness in heart.

One poor man, fully drunk, sold out his house very cheap to somebody. On gaining sobriety he petitioned in court that he had resorted to the ~~sale~~ ~~due~~ to intoxication. Now being conscious I deny that agreement. At the time of worship, prayer, people pray in various ways. “ 'O' Lord! I have come to Your refuge, I am Yours, I am lying at Your feet, only You are mine, nobody else than You is mine” etc, etc. They neither know the meanings of these words nor the implied outcomes and benefits. Whatever words are being used if they had been spoken in well thought out way, in full sobriety, then definitely efforts would have been made to shape up the sequence of life according to that state and to assimilate the same in thoughts and activities. Coming out of the place of worship, when the need is felt to convert that statement into action, then it all seems very difficult. Like the drunkard coming to sobriety, the 'devotee', having no courage to convert the statement into action, practically denies the agreement which was stated in the wordings of submission of everything to God at the time of worship.

This wish only should be associated in prayer that Supreme Soul may make us capable that we gain the respect of being called His true devoted disciples, and loved children. Supreme God may grant us that power, on the basis of which being free from fear and greed may we tread the prudent path of duty with courage and may we be firm and not bother about the obstructions in the route. Results are bound to actions. Whenever the outcomes of our past actions (*karmas*) present themselves we could tolerate them with patience and could maintain the mental state of never losing patience while continuing on the courageous path of ascent of the soul. God may purify our heart so much that no tendency to indulge in ill deeds or wrongs crops up and even if it crops up we get no occasion to implement the same. Only that prayer of high level in which strength in the legs is asked for to continue for the ideals of human-life, can be termed true prayer. That prayer, which begs for wealth, progeny, health, worldly success etc and in which there is no recall of progressive development of courageous duties, will amount to begging only. Success of such demands is generally doubtful.

Parapsychologist Dr Emily has written that prayer is not the name of thanking God or the process of begging something from Him. On the contrary it is that state of mind in which the person coming out of all the trappings of doubts and metal wavering and enters in the realms of divine faith and deep devotional love. To accept the politeness of submission by renouncing ego and to accept the authority of Supreme God by rejecting the unrestrained mental vices and weaknesses is termed prayer, in which this vow is also

added that the future life will be lived with piety and benevolence to the others according to the directions of Supreme God. Such a prayer, coming out of the depths of inner self, joined with the belief in self-refinement and self-elevation shakes the throne of God. The results of such a prayer emanated from pure hearts are astonishing and can be termed as miracles without doubt.

Nobel Laureate in Physiology and Medicine (1912) and Professor in Lyon University of France Dr. Alexis Carrel acknowledged God's mercy hidden behind his every success. He used to say that those longing for petty things cannot reach even that level of progress where ordinary beings can normally. He always noticed divine cooperation of Supreme God peering behind special equipments, special circumstances, and special ingenuity and always said only this this is a response to the prayer filled with the pure feelings emanating from the deep inner self. Along with his medical procedure he gave more importance to prayer than medicines. He used to tell every patient pray with trueness in your heart, if you pray with repentance for your mistakes and with a strong resolve to live unsoiled life in future, it will definitely be heard. One, who will be able to do this, will get rid of not only the body's illness but also internal illness.

Mahatma Gandhi had written to his one friend - "The name of Ram is a life-support for me, which takes me across every crisis. When your lusts begin to ride upon you, you sincerely call for God's help to protect and liberate you from their grip and you will get His support" When your

mind is getting weak illness of mind are increasing and you feel that you may slip at this step or the next then you should sincerely pray to God through your heart. God, who saved the elephant from the trap of the crocodile, does not desist from hearing the call of a distressed, sad devotee who wishes to get salvation from downfall; He enters the inner heart of devotee in the form of confidence that can be likened to Garuda who is accustomed to stomaching the snakes of maligned tendencies that lead to downfall.

In the state of self-submission to God, the soul states *Tasyaivāham* (I am His), *Taveivāham* (I am Yours only). Stating this again and again he gets engrossed into Him so much, gets assimilated into Him so much that he dissolves and forgets about his own entity and begins to realize himself as a form of the Supreme Soul. Then his inner voice reverberates — *Tvamevāham* (I am You only), *Śivoham* (I only am Shiva) and *Aham Brahmāsmi* (I only am Brahma).

When this experience of assimilation of God in self and of self in God grows so much in intensity that it becomes impossible to desist from converting this feeling into action then it must be recognized that the feeling of self-submission has really awakened. Such a refuge leads a person to divinity with a great speed and this movement is so intense that it pulls the Almighty to the devotee along with all His divinity. Of course God is greater, supreme. But as far as the processes of *sāadhanā-upāsanā* go, by absolute self-submission and taking refuge (in the pious feet of God) the devotee is regarded greater; his devotion is so powerful that even God appears to follow his directions. No calls of a true devotee would ever be unattended.

All pervading Divine Life Source which every moment elicits greatness in our inner heart, fills it with awareness and feelings of superior life and ideal activities, the more deeply and clearly we understand our relations with that, the more the life can be affirmed to be involved in prayer.

Knowing this meaning of prayer Mahatma Gandhi had said -  
I am not learned. But I humbly claim that I am a prayer oriented man."

The procedure of purposeful prayer only is inspiration and enlightenment. Of course the procedure is important but it should be in the form that provides inspiration and light. Where there is no realness of prayer, no inspiration and no divine light, no procedure of any kind can bear any fruit.

It is stated in "The Angel" " You do not get what you ask for. Because you ask wrong." Asking for sweets in a post office and for books in a tailor's shop can only bear frustration. God is an all-capable giver, this is true, but He is not just a giver, He is Omniscient and the Almighty parent. He knows of our necessities more than us. Hence to imagine that He will not use discretion while giving is not just ridiculous but also amounts to regarding God as dumb or desirous of flattery.

Therefore before resorting to prayer it is necessary to understand two things. First, that grace of God can be showered on us only in the form of enlightened inspirations, benevolent feelings and virtuous tendencies. Why will God grant those kinds of comforts and tendencies



that increase jealousy-envy, greed, addiction, ego, illness, and distorted thoughts?

Second, that God has created not only one or a few persons only. The omnipresent regulatory-directing power of the whole creation itself is God's reflection. That power cannot create a system, in which there would be negligence of justice and favoritism or injustice to others. Hence from such a prayer that asks for disturbing the system of the world no boon can be gained but only displeasure of God. Will it be a prayer, if one asks for - "I may to win litigations even if I indulge in immorality" "Even if others put in efforts and labor, they may always remain behind me" Or, "even if I may be engulfed in idleness, lethargy, ill addictions, I may get success and be well ahead of others all by Your grace" What would a 'God' who accepts such prayers be called? It is very clear that there is no possibility of existence of any such real God - the eternal creator, the supreme savior. Such can only be an imaginary 'God' created by one's pettiness.

If immoral desires could also be fulfilled by prayers then how can God be called as the One who sees all as equal? To come out unblemished in the case of theft-dacoity, to gain unearned wealth in gambling - stake can of course be seen days on and such gainers also regard it as God's mercy, but all this is a result of trickery, cunningness and deceit which somehow succeed in a corrupt system and not a mercy of God. If God could be pleased by burning incense sticks and by folding hands to make one pass his exams in first grade without studies, then where will be any need for hard labor

and devoted studies? If all wishes get met so easily then the principle of “fruits according to actions” (destiny as per one's *karmas*) would get fully falsified; then there will be no order, no laws of Nature, existence of the world.....

Did King Dashrath not know how to pray? Then why did he have to bear the consequences of killing Shravan Kumar by dying crying for his parted son? Lord Ram would not have even needed a prayer, just a wish would have been adequate. But he did not wish to be saved from the consequence of shooting at Bali while hiding and in the Dwapar era, this same Bali took revenge in the form of a hunter and killed Lord Krishna by shooting an arrow at his feet. Then why will He bypass that system of justice for others?

This does not mean that divine assistance is never gained. Divine boons have definitely been achieved all of a sudden with prayer, but only when prayer has been resorted to for a good cause with a refined heart.

When all the elephant's powers get exhausted and all its capability seems to nearly end only then God comes running to rescue him from the crocodile.

Undoubtedly, benefits like relief from disease, end of obstructions etc are gained from prayer but this happens only when the heart resorting to prayer is pure and man has left no stones unturned in his efforts and courage. To resort to rituals of prayers for meeting one's every small need and to wish for gaining material benefits on every

occasion of prayer belittle the level of prayer and make it ineffective. By making immoral, undesirable wishes a part of it, the prayer gets degraded from a prayer-to-God to a mere figment of imagination and emotional excitement. Such repeated demands for fulfilling mean desires do not even reach the divine realms. It only gets dispersed with air in the sky haphazardly.

A good motive is an essential requirement of prayer. Divine assistance can be gained only for superior intents like upliftment of self or welfare of society. In every era great human beings have gained divine boons only for such noble objectives and have attained extraordinary successes moving forward even in great adversity. Refined intellect, prudence, benevolent tendencies desired for superior motives can be easily attained by prayer and the same become the basis for progress in the direction of high ideals.

Whether water is hot or cold is immediately felt upon entry into water. Sitting near fire one naturally experiences its heat. Nearness of anything definitely leaves its specific effects in a man's life. Association with bad things generates vices and good things, virtues. That is why all wise people of the world want the inspiring company of good persons and good things.

The good results of *upāsana* of God can be soon experienced by any sincere devotee. Even people, who do not have knowledge of its scientific basis, are not deprived of its benefits. Lighting a matchstick knowingly or

otherwise will definitely produce fire. There is not even a little doubt that even those who have no knowledge of scientific process of *upāsanā* also, through the spiritual attainments obtainable from God, achieve their worldly and ethereal (astral) ascent by *upāsanā*.

God is like science and *upāsanā* a scientific process to attain it. *Upāsanā* of God means to sit near God. Just as man immediately starts feeling the effect of qualities of water, fire or air by its proximity, exactly in the same manner aims and peripheries of life start expanding, its powers start extending, elevating immediately upon getting the nearness of God. In that light man not only guides himself but also motivates many more others towards righteous path. The powers of a true *upāsaka* of God are considered grand and splendid because by getting assimilated in the all-powerful Light Divine, such a devotee becomes a true representative, an heir of those powers. Throwing light upon this concept, the Yajurveda states:

Saparyagāchchukumakāyavraṇamasnāviraṁ  
śuddhmāpavidddham |

*Kavirmanīṣi paribhū-svayaṁbhūryāthātathytoarthān —*

*Vydhadhāccāśvatībhyah samābhyah | |* - Yaju. (40 | 1)

Meaning: That Supreme God who is the infinite radiance, devoid of any form, who is absolutely free from defects, deviations and harms, who beyond the reach of the intellect, who is the eternal poet, preeminent thinker, creator, omnipresent, omnipotent, may He engulf our existence also in those powers.

In this *mantra* the great spiritual benefits that are attained by *upāsana* of Supreme Soul have been shown as divine attributes. These attributes are similar to the heat of fire or the coldness of water; the closer a person gets to these, proportionately these attributes begin to arise within him and in the end, getting fully immersed in them he gets freed from the sense of being.

The Supreme Soul is called '*śukram*' - light form. Light is the symbol of brightness, knowledge and is bereft of blemishes. The upliftment of the individual self by *upāsana* of God begins from this class. Up to this stage man was in the sense of a being, he lacked knowledge, he did not understand true nature of this world. Fulfillment of little momentary pleasures used to be the only aim of his life and was completely engrossed in worldly enjoyment. So his life had shortcomings and fallacies too. Lusts generate bodily illness and sorrows. They destroy capabilities of senses and man moves fast towards old age and death. Bodily weaknesses increase with luxuries and comforts as also mental anxieties. These anxieties and passions entrap man and bring him anguish and misery. But the moment *śukram* - the light element of Supreme God sparks in his life he starts feeling the meaninglessness of worldly desires. Now he feels that momentary pleasures are worthless and he sets enlightenment as the aim of his life. He sees that when I want light and infinite blissfulness why should I move aimlessly behind petty lusts. Such queries also enter in his life, in which his thoughts rush towards universe's deep secrets and sublime, mystic realms of life. That knowledge itself is the light of Supreme Soul.

Inspiration of its quest itself can be regarded as His mercy. Without getting this light of the Supreme Soul, illumined ascent of human life is not possible.

Light is the initial stage of development of a being and also its final stage. It is called initiation because expansion of powers of a being starts from here only. With dawn of this knowledge the strong desire for self-knowledge awakens in the inner heart of man, and because a being finally gets assimilated in that light itself, this is also the final stage of supreme evolution. Therefore in the Vedas the importance of knowledge is regarded as above all and without that man is regarded at par with animal.

The second quality of Supreme Soul is existence beyond all dimensions. He is formless. His body is not like that of man meaning thereby that He does not act the way men do. This attribute also very soon gets kindled in the inner heart of a worshipper. That is, when he soaks in the Supreme Soul's knowledge-element or *prāṇa*-element, first of all he realizes that till now he was considering his body only as the main source of the pleasures of this world and of fulfillment of ego; or in other words, till now his understanding of life and *prāṇa*<sup>7</sup> itself was confined to bodily perceptions alone; he begins to detach from it now. Detachment or renunciation does not mean that he relinquishes bodily actions, but now he sees his body only as an instrument or as a form of a shrine of the Supreme Soul. He understands that the passions for pleasures of sense that were troubling him so far are bodily distortions and he should not get driven or disturbed by them. This

body is perishable, made from the five basic elements of Nature and can get destroyed any time. So by lording it over, it should be employed into benevolent constructive purposes.

With the rise of these feelings, he experienced the presence of *prāṇa*-element or the consciousness-force enshrined in body and he decided that he should attain the invisible body - the subtle *prāṇa*-body. This *prāṇa*-body or energy-body is formless, which can be felt only by contemplation and thought process. Awakened subtle senses only can perceive it. Thus his mental tendencies turned inwards. He started pondering over his own bodiless form and got motivated to know its secrets.

Supreme Soul is *avraṇam* - which means that He does not get wounded in any way. Wounds can occur only in the physical body (e.g. that of a man). As remarked in the holy Gita *Nainam Chindanti śastrāṇi, nainam dahati pāvakaḥ*, no arms or weapons can pierce the soul nor can fire burn it. Till man had the sense that he is this body he disliked worldly troubles and bodily sufferings and every moment he made efforts to get rid of them, but now he has fathomed that bodily desires are always obstructions in attaining God. So he has to uproot them. This motivates him to *tapa*. *Tapa* is also called bodily penance, meaning that one volunteers for hardship and discomfort of the body and pain is inflicted upon the body deliberately so that the distinction of the soul from the body becomes clear and one gets rid of the sense of a 'physical being'.

Inflicting pain on body does not mean that it may be pierced by arms or burned on fire, rather, the effort of *tapa* correspond to adapting devout ascetic disciplines and penance to awaken endurance and tolerance against discomforts and pains so that the desires for worldly possessions and bodily pleasures dies out. Disciplined and punctual life-style, hygiene, cleanliness, hard work, self-service, regular practice of *japa*, *prāṇāyāma*, fasting etc are essential initial steps of *tapa* which are aimed at warming up and purification of the inner self, awakening and chiseled purification and illumination of the soul, to make it suitable to meet the Supreme Soul.

But man's unfulfilled desires and intrinsic impressions of the present and the past lives do not get destroyed so quickly. This cleansing of body, mind and soul is the same as cleaning a dirty drain by pouring pure water in it. At the time of cleaning the foul smell of grime deposited at the bottom spreads with such an intensity that it totally disturbs the people around. While one endeavors self-purification and self-transformation and upliftment by the various spiritual practices (*sādhana*s), then also such a 'foul odor' of negative accumulations, lusts and worldly desires is generated in the body, which totally shakes up one's mind and self-confidence. For a few moments it becomes difficult for the *sādhaka* to keep control on the mind. This turbulence erupts with *agni-dīkṣā* or *prāṇa-dīkṣā*<sup>8</sup> and therefore a great necessity of some capable and experienced guide (Guru) has been prescribed to keep balance in this state.



The *asnāviram* quality of the Supreme Soul implies this knowledge that when one sets upon the dedicated endeavor of *upāsanā* to attain the Supreme Soul then he must fully control the fickleness of body and agility of mind in every way. It is also true that the individual self when is devoted to unify with the Supreme Soul does not get affected by any perturbation of the body, provocation of senses or by mental distortions.

Supreme Soul is absolutely pure, how can He see sins in his worshipper? Pure water alone can mix in milk, dirty water spoils its appearance itself. When iron is placed in fire it also assumes the color of fire. In the same way the sins of a devotee are destroyed with his self-submission to the Supreme Soul. The process also takes place on the side of the worshipper. With awakening initiated by *upāsanā*, he realizes that it is not possible to achieve the Supreme Soul while living a sinful life. Maintaining balance in both these stages he patiently cleanses out his sins, and remains engrossed in acquiring the qualifications for attaining the Supreme Soul.

The power of emotions is considered greater than that of thoughts. Supreme soul is a thinker as well as a poet - who has a reach into the depths of emotions. A poem is a portrayal of the omnipresence of the soul. When the soul evolves, it begins to feel the joys and sorrows of the whole world as its own joys and sorrows. This quality awakens in a worshipper of God also in the same form. In him also arise the blessed poet-like feelings of compassion, love, sacrifice, generosity, good conduct, serenity, sympathy and

tolerance of pain, etc. He takes special pleasure in helping others, renouncing selfishness. All the saints and devotees in this world have unanimously described the altruistic service of humanity only as the supreme religion. Sainly transformation of many ordinary men and women occurred only when by worship of the Supreme Soul, natural poet-like qualities-sensitivities got awakened in them. It is well known in history that when wicked and cruel natured people like Valmiki, Ajamil and Sadan took refuge in the holy feet of God they turned so compassionate in heart that they dedicated their whole self in the selfless service of humanity.

On reaching the pinnacle of thoughts and feelings the worshipper gets a taste of *pari-bhu* power of God. God is omnipresent, *pari-bhu*. His power indwells in every particle of this world. He only has created mountains, rivers, oceans, plants, vegetation, sun, moon planets, everything, every manifestation of Nature. His light alone is pervaded everywhere. He alone is playing His game in the activities of each and every particle. Oceans, lands and heavens there is no place, no horizon, which is devoid of God. This immense world is also His form only. He has an eye on each and every straw of grass; that somebody's behavior be hidden from him is never possible. No one can escape from His sight, some person talks or thinks bad and He may not listen, this is not possible ever. The worshipper gets overwhelmed with the immense joy of realizing this omnipresence of Supreme Soul. Merged with the indestructible Element he sees himself also in the form of the all-pervading Supreme Force and then turns

omnipresent himself, all beings now become for him, his own forms.

Supreme Soul is all-powerful too. His management is unbounded, very unique, perfect. He takes care of all actions of the world. He only renders the fruits of every action. He only protects, maintains and destroys (transforms) the whole creation. But He does all this without attachment, without any lacuna. Only with a view of the welfare of this world, He has developed and expressed His powers and He keeps bestowing their benefits too to the whole world. The one who holds on to Him, attaining this preeminent quality of God, also becomes perfect and gets detached and liberated from the thralldoms of life. The great enlightenment and transformation induced by *upāsanā* is expressed in the rhetorical style of the scriptures in the following hymn:

Shrunve vrushteriv svanah pavamasya shushminah |  
*Charanti vichuto divi* | | - *Rigveda* 9|41|3

Meaning: When the mighty *Soma* (the divine source of moon like soothing light) is worshipped, His effulgence appears like brilliance and movement of lightening and His sound appears like the sound of rain clouds.

Prayer and *upāsanā* of God has been regarded as good for man. All the religions and sects of beliefs of the ancient times have prescribed some procedure or the other for this. Consider those who regard God as formless or those who believe in a God with form, all consent to the utility of

offering paeans and prayers to God. In India there exist not hundreds but thousands of different sects, whose principles may have a world of difference, but one thing they all have in common is that in one form or the other they surely sing praises of God and pray to seek His blessings. A few men with partial or superficial knowledge in the name of modern science may oppose this fact but the truth is that neither have they understood the subtlety of science nor have they ventured into the realm of spirituality. After listening to a few conversations here and there, such men usually begin to consider themselves as learned and in that craze and prejudice begin to talk nonsense against the people who are much more experienced and even against the great souls who have entered the depths of the ocean of knowledge.

But one essential condition for *sādhana* and *upāsana* is that it should be carried out with true feelings and a concentrated mind. Several so called spiritual men of these days who visit a temple merely to show off to the world or to follow some tradition, or do one odd *japa* of rosary to follow some ritual or to get some desire fulfilled, no significant outcome can be expected from this. *Upāsana* and *sādhana* can be regarded as true only when during that period man gets completely absorbed in God leaving aside all the worldly pleasures and his mundane affairs. When man gets occupied in this kind of *upāsana* of his tutelary deity with devout dedication and focused mind, only then he can proceed on the path of spirituality and gain benefits of the divine mercy. To elicit this fact it has been explained in the above *mantra* of Rig-Veda that when man carries out

*upāsanā* of the Supreme Soul with his heart and soul then he begins to see God's effulgence and begins to experience how His unending grace is being showered around every where.

An ordinary man during the course of his life in this world has to face several obstacles, has to go through adverse circumstances, has to fight against many oppositions and has to bear all sorts of justified or unjustified criticisms. Due to this many times in his life arise situations of rage unrest, fear, angst etc that affect him to at least some extent and he begins to experience mental stress and unrest. When such a man takes shelter in the Supreme Soul to overcome his sufferings and to obtain peace for his mind and soul and carries out His *upāsanā* with devoted diligence, then all his lack of faith begins to transform into faith. Moving ahead in his *sāadhanā* he begins to experience the play of God's strength all around and begins to understand that whatever is going on in this world is inspired by God and is a result of God's wish. Man may not understand this that very moment but as the anxiety and unrest of his mind subsides he feels like a man who was scorched, distressed and tired in the intense summer heat has obtained the coolness and blissfulness of monsoon season.

Man has discovered a variety of religious practices and so called *sāadhanās* to fulfill his various desires. To obtain wealth, children, affluence, authority, knowledge, intelligence etc people adopt many kinds of methods and depending upon their worth, they also keep succeeding to

a lesser or larger extent. But to obtain spiritual peace, enlightenment and to get rid of worldly sorrows and attain unalloyed joy, there is only one way that man must leave aside all his multifarious desires and take refuge in Supreme Soul with a truthful heart, and offer praise and prayers to Him with pure feelings. We should remember that in fact God alone is the one who grants us all we desire. So if through His mercy we obtain spiritual peace and light then all other fair needs and desires would get fulfilled on their own.

Several people from this exposition may deduce that by getting absorbed in the contemplation of God all man's desires would subside, feelings to renunciate this world would arise in him and he would attain spiritual satisfaction this way. While there is some truth in this thought, but to think that upasana of Supreme Soul has no relation with fulfillment of worldly desires is not correct. In another Vedic *mantra* it has been stated that "*apamiv pravane yasya durdharam rādho viśvāyu śavase apavātam*" The flow of God's wealth never stops. His worshippers attain it the same way as the down flowing shower or rains. In current times too there have been several people who despite being ordinarily educated and with average intelligence, have lived a blissful life due to their intense faith in the Supreme Soul and have easily accomplished theirs and others' great and important tasks. When we read accounts of miracles performed by saints, ascetics and devotees in our ancient scripts then it clearly comes out that those who perform *upāsana* of God with true heart have no dearth of worldly riches, talents and powers.

Benevolent results and benefits of *upāsanā* are bound to occur in every field of life.

It has also been stated in this *mantra* that worshippers of the Supreme Soul also get a sight of His divine effulgence. To think of it this alone is the criterion to test whether one's *upāsanā* is being carried out sincerely or not. Anyone who contemplates on God with a completely absorbed and concentrated mind is bound to experience His divine radiance after some time. This brilliance itself, by illuminating the inner heart of a spiritual seeker, removes all his doubts and queries and shows him the true way of life. This way the man gets qualified to attain the true knowledge and the capacity to overcome all sorts of worldly obstacles. This alone is the gist of the philosophy and real form of the true *upāsanā*.



## Footnotes: Glossary of Sanskrit Words Used in This Book

1. *Dharma, Artha and Kāma* are the foundational pillars of human life headed for ultimate ascent *mokṣa*. *Dharma* - righteous conduct, transaction of altruistic duties; *Artha* - attainment of worldly resources and prosperous progress; *Kāma* creative zeal for fulfillment of desires and joy.
2. *Upāsanā*: Devout worship or devotional practice to enable the devotee recall and experience God's presence within and around him. The word meaning of "*upāsanā*" is 'to sit near'. In simple terms, it is a devotional practice of sitting near God, i.e., having an emotional proximity with divinity that induces awakening of the divine qualities hidden in the devotee.
3. *Sāadhanā*: Devout spiritual endeavor aimed at inner refinement and elevation; it begins with dedicated efforts of self-discipline and self-transformation through control over mind and other senses.
4. *Rishi*: Seer-sages and saints of the Vedic Age.
5. *Tapa (tapasyā)*: Devout austerity, penance and ascetic endeavors of self-purification.
6. *Rudra*: The supreme force that ruins all devil powers and debased instincts.



- 7      *Prāṇa*: Vital spiritual energy, manifestation of Life-Force.
- 8      *Agni-dīkṣā* or *Prāṇa-dīkṣā*: The process of initiation of spiritual transformation by transmission or awakening of supramental force in the devotee (by the spiritual master - guru)



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**Shri Vedmata Gayatri Trust**  
Shantikunj, Haridwar

Ph. 91-(0)1334-260602, 261955    Website: [www.awgp.org](http://www.awgp.org)